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ABSTRACT

The 11 journal articles reviewed in this annotated bibliography focus on ways teachers and principals can improve the quality of teaching. Among the four articles directed toward principals are two that relate to the culture of the school; another presents a model to principals for achieving quality instruction; and the fourth proposes six strategies principals can use in classroom observation. Articles directed toward teachers describe: (1) a self-assessment procedure to help teachers and supervisors improve instructional effectiveness; (2) a teacher-directed, mastery learning approach used by the Exemplary Center for Reading Instruction (ECRI); (3) strategies that teachers can use to expand student thinking capability; and (4) a mastery learning program for teachers. Research applications are discussed in two articles: one reviews six paradigms of classroom research that have helped define the concept of effective teaching; the other, citing views of teaching as both a science and an art, deals with the difficulty in assessing teacher effectiveness through conventional research methods. The final article explores the six common factors of the Instructionally Effective Schools approach as a way to improve education without additional funding. (MLF)

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The Best of ERIC presents annotations of ERIC literature on important topics in educational management.

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ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management
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Improving the Quality of Teaching

1 **Beach, Don M., and Reinhartz, Judy.** "Improving Instructional Effectiveness: A Self-Assessment Procedure." *Illinois School Research and Development*, 19, 1 (Fall 1982): 5-12. EJ 276 179.

There is no question that helping teachers improve their instructional effectiveness is a challenging task for today's secondary school principal. Trust, clear communication, and continuous, positively oriented classroom supervision that is nonthreatening in its approach are keys to providing noticeable improvement in instructional effectiveness.

The kind of supervision proposed here by Beach and Reinhartz is a self- assessment procedure founded on "teacher self-awareness and an objective perception of the instructional self based on research findings." With its focus on gathering data, this procedure is intended to "foster instructional improvement rather than to promote personnel decisions," say the authors.

Drawing from a summary of findings on variables in teaching by Walberg, Schiller, and Haertzel (1979), the authors list fourteen variables "for which 90 percent or more of the studies indicated an impact on learning." Among these are time on learning, curriculum innovation, mastery learning, psychological incentives, and motivation and learning.

According to a study by Rosenshine and Furst (1971), nine variables— such as clarity of instruction, explanation and enthusiasm during instruction, task orientation, and levels of discourse—are associated with effective teaching. Findings from Manatt's (1981) study of teacher practices that correlate with effective teaching are also listed.

The supervisor's task, Beach and Reinhartz advise, is to serve as "a catalyst in helping teachers become aware of research implications for teaching." A construct showing components of the self-assessment procedure and a self-assessment inventory of twelve teacher behaviors is given, as well as a seventeen-question self-assessment instrument for diagnosing the teacher's lessons.

2 **Borich, Gary D.** "Paradigms of Teacher Effectiveness Research: Their Relationship to the Concept of Effective Teaching." *Education and Urban Society*, 18, 2 (February 1986): 143-67. EJ 336 994.

Borich reviews six paradigms of classroom research that have helped contemporary educators to define the concept of effective teaching. "Each paradigm captures life in classrooms in equally valid ways," he states, but with a number of marked differences that necessitate their coexistence. Equally important is the significance of the paradigms "in determining how the teaching-learning process has come to be defined."

These methodological paradigms, developed over a thirty-year period, are process-anecdotal, process-systematic, process-product, experimental, process-process and process-product, and process-process-product. Describing each one in detail, Borich also discusses the influence of the paradigms on the concept of teaching today. "All of these paradigms have at least one thing in common," he says. "They depend upon the direct observation of classroom behavior . . . to measure teacher and/or pupil processes" associated with school achievement.

The relationship of the paradigms to "direct" and "indirect" models of teaching is illustrated by a continuum that embodies both ends of "prevailing cultural and scientific perspectives within teaching effectiveness research."

Finally, Borich discusses paradigms as alternative conceptions of schooling. Researchers have usually focused on one paradigm only in doing their studies, often considering other paradigms as mutually exclusive. "It is easy to believe," he says, "that our most recent paradigms are superior to earlier ones." But, while paradigms may have changed over time, the values, beliefs, and goals they are based on may be as prominent in society today as when the paradigm was created. One interpretation, therefore, is that instead of considering successive paradigms as more advanced, "these paradigms represent alternative and equally valid conceptions of schooling."

3 **Calabrese, Raymond L.** "Effective Schools and Classroom Instruction." *The Clearing House*, 59, 6 (February 1986): 272-74. EJ 331 127.

A principal must truly be an instructional leader if he or she is to implement the changes required to upgrade the school's quality of education. Such changes, says Calabrese, need to take place in the area of improving instruction in the classroom if they are to be achieved quickly and effectively. Citing Good and Brophy's book on effective teaching, *Looking in the Classroom*, the author contends that this kind of leadership is possible when principals clearly understand classroom observation and staff evaluation.

In this brief article several elements of evaluation from various research sources are noted. These include rewards for superior performance, modifying assignments, professional development, staff retention, and promotion. This wide perspective on evaluation, however, has relegated classroom observation to a secondary

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position, which ultimately results in "incomplete and hurried assessments."

Classroom observation, despite other demands made on a principal's time, is important. It requires planning and often a reliance on observation instruments such as checklists or rating scales. Personal biases must also be accounted for.

Using direct research methods, a principal can accurately assess classroom environment and thus make meaningful recommendations toward improving instruction. To achieve this goal, the principal can use six strategies: random sampling, student response, coded instruments, patterned observation, assisting with instructional objectives, and inservice programs. These strategies will establish a database that, when shared between principal and teachers, should improve instruction and "can only result in a more effective school," concludes Calabrese.

4 **Firestone, William A., and Wilson, Bruce L.** "[illegible]ng Bureaucratic and Cultural Linkages to Improve Instruction: The Principal's Contribution." *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 21, 2 (Spring 1985): 7-30. EJ 318 294.

Principals have a key role to play in improving instruction in their schools, despite the fact their impact on instruction may be limited, say researchers Firestone and Wilson. By using the "bureaucratic and cultural linkages" available to them, the quality of instruction can in fact be positively influenced. These linkages are defined as relationships that couple or interact with the activities of organizational members.

Bureaucratic linkages are formal, lasting arrangements—such as rules, roles, and procedures—that allow an organization to function; they are the "prescribed framework of the organization." Cultural linkages, on the other hand, are the subjective expression of shared meanings within a group; these include content, symbols, stories and rituals, and communication patterns.

Five kinds of bureaucratic linkages, identified by Daft (1983), are hierarchical referral and supervision, rules and procedures, plans and schedules, adding positions, and vertical information systems. Because supervision is often seen as a tangible way to tighten linkages, it appeals to many principals. Yet, while this can have some impact, increased supervision is "not likely to become *the* master linkage through which principals make massive modification in teachers' classroom or instructional behavior." An integrated approach that nurtures both supervisory and planning linkages is more likely to have a greater impact.

Equally important are cultural linkages that "work directly on people's consciousness to influence how they think about what they do." Spreading positive stories, creating and manipulating meaningful symbols and rituals, and consistently interacting with various school elements are all ways that principals can strengthen the cultural linkages in their buildings. The principal's challenge, the authors believe, "is to develop a clear vision of the purposes of the school that gives primacy to instruction and to carry it through consistently during those countless interactions."

5 **Firestone, William A., and Wilson, Bruce L.** "Culture of School Is a Key to More Effective Instruction." *NASSP Bulletin*, 68, 476 (December 1984): 7- 11. EJ 311 627.

Understanding a school's culture and identifying its key elements can help principals improve their school's effectiveness, say researchers Firestone and Wilson. School cultures, they point out, can influence such vital concerns as teacher commitment, emotional ties to the school, and willingness to follow rules; as such, school cultures deserve close attention by principals. "The school's culture," they add, "can help to define staff tasks," including standards for student achievement, maintaining order, and deviation from official curriculum.

With its roots in anthropology, the notion of culture suggests that principals may observe certain aspects of daily school life and eventually initiate changes that can reshape the culture. Focus on content, symbols, and communication patterns will help to assess a school's culture. Content deals with commitments and task definitions that promote effective instruction. Symbols are the conveyors of content and include stories (myths, legends, true accounts), icons (flags, trophies, paraphernalia), and rituals (assemblies, meetings, conferences). Communication patterns serve to "reinforce the cultural content carried by symbols."

Principals can shape their school's culture by being active communicators of that culture, by managing stories, and by allocating funds and space for instructional benefit. But first, they must be clear about their own values, task definitions, and commitments. "Culture creation," the authors conclude, "is an important part of the principal's leadership responsibility and can be accomplished by shaping the flow of stories among teachers and attending to the content of school ritual.

6 **Irwin, Claire C.** "Model Describes How Principals Can Achieve Quality Instruction." *NASSP Bulletin*, 69, 482 (September 1985): 119-23. EJ 325 271.

"Ultimate responsibility for the effectiveness of schools lies with the principals," asserts Irwin. Using "research-validated directions," she offers a model for achieving quality instruction that embodies a planning phase; assessment of the context; variables in subject matter presentation, class management, and teacher-student relationships; and identification of inhibiting variables.

Beginning with a master plan for supervising instruction, principals, together with a staff task force, should develop general, long-range educational goals and short-range, specific content objectives. The classroom setting, the locus of appraisals, needs to be conducive to learning and reflect the subject matter taught.

Variables for successful presentation of subject matter include quality of course outlines, conscientious preparation, clear presentation, and use of appropriate materials. "Excellence in instruction," Irwin believes, "depends upon the academic emphasis in the classroom."

Among questions that need to be answered concerning effective class management and student-teacher relationships are the following: Does the teacher involve students in class management tasks? Is there quick feedback on student tests? How much time do students spend on task? What teaching methods are used to attract and encourage students to learn?

According to Irwin, two factors that can inhibit effective instruction are the isolation of secondary teachers and students' test taking behaviors. Secondary teachers "receive very little help from school administrators or from fellow teachers" and seem quite satisfied with the situation. Students, meanwhile, often display test-taking anxieties that lower their scores, as well as block their learning. Irwin reports research on eight test-anxiety interventions—such as reassurance, modeling, self-monitoring, relaxation, and social support—to help remedy poor test performance and detraumatize educational experiences.

7 **Mann, Dale, and Inman, Deborah.** "Improving Education within Existing Resources: The Instructionally Effective Schools' Approach." *Journal of Education Finance*, 10, 2 (Fall 1984): 256-69. EJ 316 771.

One of the toughest challenges facing educators today is to improve the quality of public schools without additional funding. One solution, say Mann and Inman, is to manipulate "school variables within existing resources, through the Instructionally Effective Schools' approach." In this article, they explore six common factors of the IES: teacher behavior and characteristics, ad-

ministrator behavior, student body composition, school learning climate, pupil evaluation procedures, and curriculum materials.

The authors conducted a Delphi study in which a panel of experts estimated how much each of these factors contributed to instructional effectiveness. "Not surprisingly," say Mann and Inman, "teacher variables led the way." As they point out, "more is known, more reliably, about more detailed kinds of behaviors with respect to effective teaching" than any other factor.

Items having to do with teacher behavior and characteristics included classroom time usage, what is taught and what is tested, teacher expectations about student performance, and teachers as classroom managers. This last item, for example, dealt with teachers holding students accountable for assignments, keeping a brisk pace in class, and monitoring seatwork. "One way to summarize this," say the authors, "is to say that when teachers teach, children learn, and . . . the more teachers teach, the more children learn."

Teacher expectations should be "high but attainable, modified periodically, and positively reinforced," say Mann and Inman.

Concerning the factor school learning climate, the authors state, "If a school is to have an effect it has to be through more than the efforts of a single outstanding teacher." Teachers' professional autonomy must give way to more cooperation among teachers, 60 percent of the panel members agreed. The panel endorsed collaborative planning and participative decision- making as means to implement effective schools.

The authors conclude with a quantification of all six variables expressed as a "production function"—meaning that different inputs will combine to produce different outputs—and with a summary of the policy implications of each area.

8

Ornstein, Allan C. "Teacher Effectiveness Research: Some Ideas and Issues." *Education and Urban Society*, 18, 2 (February 1986): 168-75. EJ 336 995.

The difficulty in assessing teacher effectiveness through conventional research methods is that teaching is an inexact science at best and is therefore fraught with inconsistencies that often render research conclusions unacceptable or contestable. Part of the problem, says Ornstein, is that terms, measurements, and methods lack universally accepted definitions, thus sometimes invalidating "so-called acceptable findings." "The more complex or unpredictable one views teaching as being," he contends, "the more one is compelled toward a belief that it is very difficult to define or agree upon generalizations about successful teaching."

The two central issues dealt with here are whether we should view teaching as a science or an art and the attendant research problems in treating teaching as more scientific than artistic. Citing Gage (1984), he notes that "teaching is more than a science . . . because it also involves artistry—the use of judgment, hunches, and insight." The unpredictability of the teaching process, with its spontaneity and intuitive approaches, defies in part the quantifiable methods applied to more exact sciences. Techniques and principles cannot easily be prescribed for the classroom or be readily learned by others.

On the other hand, if one views teaching partly as a science, then it is possible to observe, measure with accuracy, and predict teaching practices and behaviors. This dichotomy is not easy to resolve, but the author believes that a blending of the two notions can provide workable ground for future research. "There is nothing wrong," he says, "in considering good teaching to be a love affair, akin to good music or fine wine, but we must also consider it to lend itself to a prescriptive science of practice."

When we take a scientific stance, however, there are a number of research problems that must be dealt with. Ornstein describes ten such problems and offers partial solutions. For example, "successful teachers" may not be viewed as such by all students; the same teacher can have a different effect on different students, in different classes, with different subject matters, and so forth. Also, measuring instruments used to assess teacher effectiveness may be distorted, leading to inaccurate findings.

9

Reid, Ethna R. "Practicing Effective Instruction: The Exemplary Center for Reading Instruction Approach." *Exceptional Children*, 52, 6 (April 1986): 510-19. EJ 334 349.

The Exemplary Center for Reading Instruction (ECRI) teaches teachers how to use instructional strategies and a management system that have been shown to prevent reading failure and enhance the learning of language skills. Reid delineates the center's guiding principles, most of which apply to other content areas and levels than reading in the elementary grades. She also discusses steps for incorporating ECRI strategies into existing language arts programs and reviews data on effectiveness with a variety of student types.

Working with findings from early research studies, ECRI found that student learning increases when: (1) pupils are provided with greater amounts of quality instructional time; (2) teachers positively reinforce their students for increasing oral reading speed and accuracy; (3) students are taught to display overt, rapid, and accurate responses to specific teacher directives; (4) teachers provide a supervised practice time for students and require high levels of mastery; (5) instruction is introduced in a demonstration-prompt-practice process; and (6) the teaching of language skills is correlated. Each of these elements is detailed here.

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The program, says Reid, the center's director, "can best be described as a highly structured, teacher-directed, mastery learning approach." Despite this, materials are structured so that even low achievers can experience success from the start. Achievement gain through ECRI programs "falls in the upper range of that expected for Chapter I programs."

10 **Strong, Richard W.; Silver, Harvey F.; and Hanson, Robert.** "Integrating Teaching Strategies and Thinking Styles with the Elements of Effective Instruction." *Educational Leadership*, 42, 8 (May 1985): 9-15. EJ 319 809.

Using the elements of lesson design as a foundation, teachers can expand student thinking capability by incorporating appropriate teaching strategies, say Strong and his colleagues. The authors, educational consultants, assert that, although thinking skills can be added to existing curriculum and special courses in thinking can be introduced, this "will not guarantee the transfer of thinking to regular classroom work in content areas." However, providing teachers with strategies that "elicit and model various thinking styles" may effectively enhance student thinking while retaining the prescribed curriculum.

The authors created three fictitious characters who interact in a question-answer format to deal with this issue, each character representing a set of actual concerns faced by educators today. Defining *strategy* as "a plan to move a group toward a goal," the characters cite current research to explore how strategies can build on accepted principles of learning to move learners toward curriculum objectives. Among the questions raised are the following: Does the teacher monitor and adjust his or her behavior to meet the needs of the students? Is the learning at the correct level? Are teacher and student behaviors appropriate to the objective?

Selecting appropriate strategies is critical and involves clarifying objectives and defining five goals of education: (1) mastery of basic skills, (2) developing understanding through intellectual and academic skills, (3) synthesis of these skills applied to new contexts, (4) finding relevance in learning for ultimate success at school, and (5) cultural literacy in knowing culturally important information.

The elements of lesson design, teaching styles, and strategies are synthesized and graphically illustrated. "By selecting one strategy over another," they say, "teachers emphasize one style of thinking over another." Advice is given to principals on how to integrate such strategies into their present curriculum. Information sources are also listed.

11 **Westerberg, Tim.** "Mastery Learning for Teachers: A Competency Based Program for Improving Instruction." *NASSP Bulletin*, 67,461 (March 1983): 22-25. EJ 277 982.

The Teacher Improvement Project (TIP) at Liberty Senior High School (Missouri) is based on the assumption, validated by research, that student achievement goes hand in hand with certain teacher behaviors. Westerberg, the school's principal, says the staff development program is "tied to the existing teacher evaluation process."

To implement TIP, Westerberg and his staff first identified specific behaviors characteristic of poor and effective teaching and then developed a list of competencies transcending participants' own philosophies and preferences. A list of twenty-seven research-based behaviors (time on task, teacher enthusiasm, questioning and testing methods, instructional content and materials, learning environment, performance standards, and other factors) was distributed to teachers at a faculty meeting.

After selecting fifteen high priority behaviors, faculty used an inservice day to brainstorm implementation strategies. Each interdisciplinary team of approximately ten members was responsible for three TIP behaviors and "for determining what constitutes 'mastery' of each behavior."

A table summarizes teachers' statements concerning two effective teaching behaviors and their mastery requirements. For example, under "Techniques employing encouragement or positive reinforcement are used regularly," *mastery* is defined as consistent performance of eight of the fourteen techniques and emphasis of two others in which the teacher would like to improve.

To improve reinforcement skills, teachers might work on communication methods, expectations, criticism and reward systems, curriculum relevancy, peer encouragement, and other specific techniques. Because teachers helped develop criteria and mastery standards, they feel committed to the project and to ongoing self-improvement.

Teachers will eventually master all twenty-seven competencies. Teachers' programs are individualized and not confined to specific time frames. Profile sheets record teachers' progress, and future inservice programs may be geared to certain desired competencies. Although teacher development and assessment were still separate at Liberty High when Westerberg wrote this article, he envisioned "a natural merger of these two processes" as program refinement and mutual trust develop.

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